HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

SDIR • NUMBER 107 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

Chair

Mr. Michael Levitt

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● (1310)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone.

I am going to call this meeting of the Subcommittee on International Human rights to order. Because of some happenings last week in committee, we are still going to continue with our Iran Accountability Week—or week and a half—testimony.

We have on the line Pariya Kohandel, who is going to be providing testimony before the subcommittee.

I'll just give her a little bit of an introduction.

Ms. Kohandel is an Iranian human rights activist based in Berlin, Germany. Her father is Saleh Kohandel, a key figure in the principal Iranian opposition movement, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran. In 2006, he was arrested and eventually sentenced to 10 years in prison for refusing to publicly denounce PMOI. Her aunt and uncle, also members of PMOI, were killed in an Iraqi army raid on Camp Ashraf, PMOI headquarters in Iraq.

In an opinion piece for *The Washington Times*, Ms. Kohandel stated that the Iraqi raid on Camp Ashraf was carried out at the behest of Tehran. With the help of the PMOI network inside and outside Iran, she fled the country for Europe following graduation from high school in the summer of 2015. She continues to advocate for the respect of human rights in Iran, particularly with regard to Iranian youth and political prisoners, such as her father.

Ms. Kohandel, can you hear me?

Ms. Pariya Kohandel (As an Individual): Yes.

The Chair: Great.

We don't have video, but we do have audio. If you'd like to begin for 10 to 12 minutes, that would be great. Then we will have the members ask you some questions.

Please begin your testimony.

Ms. Pariya Kohandel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable members.

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity as a simple example of a young Iranian who grew up in Iran and had to flee Iran to be able to be the voice of my friends. If any one of them were here today, there were [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] to testify about.

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

The Chair: Ms. Kohandel, I am really sorry. We are not getting the audio very clearly, so we are going to have to suspend for a moment while we try to deal with this. Give us one minute.

● _____ (Pause) _____

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I want to apologize to those who have come in to hear the testimony. We've lost the connection to Ms. Kohandel. We're going to attempt to get a written version of her testimony. Given that, and given that we have committee business to attend to, we're going to go in camera.

I want to thank you for making the effort to be here. I know that both this week and last Thursday it has not worked out so well, but thank you for your efforts and for being here for Iran Accountability Week.

We will now go in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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